

Eminence in Gifts, in extent of Commission, in miraculous Operations: The Apostles resembling the ^a twelve Princes of the Tribes of their Fathers, Heads of Thousands in Israel; the Disciples representing the ^b Seventy Elders bearing the burthen of the People: that thus in establishing the perpetuall Government of the House of Israel, the same form of Polity might be continued, the same Subordination of Rulers, corresponding no less in superiority of power than in exactness of number.

The Supereminency of the Twelve above the Disciples was so determin'd, that when Judas by transgression fell from his dignity, the Holy Ghost gave direction to supply the vacancy, by an Election out of the Seventy; fulfilling that propheticall imprecation, *let another take his Bishoprick.* Not but this eminence of the Apostles above the Disciples was manifested in the delegation of it, wherein Christ by a solemn Act placed them upon an equality with himself. For when He that primary Apostle was sent by the Father; as the ^a Spirit of the Lord was upon him to anoint him to preach the Gospel: so when the Twelve Apostles were sent by him, he thus consecrated them, *as the Father sent me, even so send I you; and when he had said this, he breath'd on them, and said, receive ye the Holy Ghost.*

^a Numb. 1. 16.

^b Numb. 11. 16, 17.

^c Psal. 109. 8. & Act. 1. 20.

^d II. 61. 1.

^e Joh. 20. 21.

Ghost. As the Father sent me to chuse you out of the world, and to ordain you to the Ministry of Salvation: so send I you to separate others, by a successive Ordination.

Not that we insist on these preliminary Acts of Christ, in the choice of the Number and Ordination of the Apostles, lest we should derogate from their more solemn Inauguration to that high Dignity, when they were anointed with the Holy Ghost and with Fire: and whilst in building of the Church we adore the subordinate concurrence in the Persons of the Godhead, we must avoid confusion in the Acts of their Offices. The Collecting and Sanctifying of the Church is the eminent and appropriate Act of the Holy Ghost, the eternal Spirit of Truth, the other Comforter, who upon our Saviour's Ascension to his Throne, in the mysterious method of the Divine Mission came down, not for a transitory space, but to gather and to preside over his Evangelical Church, to order and to establish it for ever. Did Christ then lay the Foundation? the Holy Ghost built thereupon. Did Christ call the Twelve to be Ministers of Salvation? the Holy Ghost was to anoint them to preach the Gospel. Did Christ send the Twelve to be his Embassadors to the world? the Holy Ghost was to sign their infallible credentials.

Not

Not that in the publick consignation of these powers to the Apostles the Holy Ghost did act or speak wholly of himself: but as he should bring to their remembrance all Christ's former instructions; so he should *hereafter take of* ^{Joh. 16. 13, 14.} *Christ's and shew it unto them.* And as our Saviour was originally concurring in the grant, so was he perpetually coassisting in the Execution. For when he issued out the Commission to the Apostles to go and disciple all nations, he entail'd this promise, *behold I am with you alway even* ^{Matt. 28. 20.} *unto the End of the world.*

Surely the conformity of these successive acts of our Saviour in founding Episcopacy do far exceed the languid testimonies of his bare approbation and countenance, or the oblique and accidental insinuations of Scripture wrested in its favour.

But if these arguments cannot induce some abstracting spirits to grant it a divine institution, ordain'd by Christ himself, yet, what amounts to the same, they must be constrain'd to yield it an Apostolical ordinance instituted by the commission'd Apostles. If then it shall appear that these great legates of the Son of God did constitute and ordain this uniform order of Episcopal Government in all Churches of the Saints; 'twill be no less impious to reject their constitutions,

B

than

than to deny their doctrines, who acted as well as spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

St. Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, tho' in his own opinion counted a posthumous and supernumerary Apostle, yet equal to the rest in the warrant of his vocation, and superior to them in the execution; this glorious Apostle, who as he labour'd, so wrote more abundantly than they all, in the Churches which he planted and in the writings which he left, did set up this actual and settled government, and gave laws for its perpetual administration.

To Timothy was committed the oversight of the Church of Ephesus, the Metropolitan over the Asian Churches: to Titus the populous Island of Crete. In his Epistles to these primary Prelates, what distinguishing marks do we find of the special powers of Ordination and Jurisdiction vested in their high and holy Function? which yet the Apostle seems to mention, only to remind them of their charge, not to establish the grant of it; to press them to the exercise, not to confirm the title of their Jurisdiction.

1st. If we consider the power of Ordination vested in Timothy, by that express command of the Apostle to lay hands suddenly on no man, we find not the delegation of this power, but

an advice for the cautious administration of it in the Church.

There were multitudes of Presbyters resident in the populous Church of *Ephesus*. If then any one or if all together had an equal power to ordain without him, the restriction of this charge to *Timothy* had been superfluous: if with him, why were they not joyn'd in the Commission?

But how could Presbyters be instructed in the communication of Episcopal power, which was superiour to their own? for *without contradiction as the less is blessed, so is he consecrated of the greater*. And as *St. Paul* commands *Timothy* alone by a general injunction to lay hands suddainly on no man; so in the character of a Bishop he gives a more particular and ample description, lest *Timothy* might err by an hasty consecration.

Again, in the ordination of Deacons tho' of inferior consequence, *Timothy* alone is charged to prove their conversation and abilities by an antecedent examination; and if found qualify'd according to the canonical directions of the Apostle, to admit them to use the office of a Deacon. *1 Tim. 3. 10.*

2dly. The jurisdictional power vested in *Timothy* appears thro' the whole tenour of the Epistles, over Presbyters, over Deacons, over false teachers,

teachers, extending to all parts of government, over all the members of the Church.

1st. As to Presbyters, *Timothy* must charge them, that in preaching they presume to ^ateach no other doctrine than what was prescrib'd, not intermeddling, no nor even attending to useless fables and perplex'd genealogies.

Again, if any Presbyter were eminent in the discharge of his function, *Timothy* must distinguish him in respect and maintenance; ^b if an Elder rule well, labouring in word and doctrine, let him be counted worthy of double honour.

But if an Elder be impeach'd of any criminal delinquency, *Timothy* must receive his accusation, not upon single or partial evidence, but before two or three legal witnesses. And if convicted of misdemeanour, *Timothy* must by publick censure ^d rebuke him before all, that others also may fear. And that in rewarding of faithful Presbyters and in correcting of delinquents *Timothy* is charg'd before God and the Elect Angels, ^e to observe these things, without preferring one Presbyter before another, doing nothing by partiality.

If *Timothy's* Jurisdiction over the venerable consistory of Presbyters be thus conspicuous, how much more over the inferiour and probationary order of Deacons? and, if his sway be thus

thus eminent over his consecrated Brethren, how much rather over the mix'd and undistinguish'd Laity? yea what might be rationally deduced, is actually confirm'd in his charge to superintend the 'choice and maintenance of Deaconesses and Widows, to controll the exorbitance, and to prevent the encroachment of false teachers, to reprove, to rebuke, to exhort as with all long suffering so with all authority, not suffering any disobedience to be offer'd to the dignity of his government, nor contempt to the sanctity of his person. Tim. 5. 3. 9.

Thus in this short enumeration, we find *Timothy* placed over the great Metropolitan Church of *Ephesus* as in God's stead, with a like preeminence of power as King *Saul* exalted over his Brethren: and those venerable respects and subjection, which might be abated by his 'natural youth, are sustain'd by his deriv'd Authority. Tim. 4. 12.

And as the great Apostle of the Gentiles committed the oversight of the *Asian* Churches to *Timothy*, so he placed *Titus* in the Bishoprick of *Crete*, in the same heighth of superiority, in the same latitude of jurisdiction. This was no limitary charge, confin'd to a parochial district or narrow division, but the oversight of the Churches over all *Crete*, a populous Island renowned of old for the multitude of it's Cities;

yet in every one of these cities *Titus* was appointed to ordain Elders, in every city to correct disorders. This was the foundation of his residence in that Island: for *for this cause* (saith *St. Paul*) *left^a I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst ordain Elders in every city, and set in order the things that are wanting or^b amiss.*

Thus the very entrance of this Epistle declares in exprefs terms *Titus's* investiture to the special power of ordination: and the sequel attests his jurisdiction, whilst it gives directions for its execution. If to stop the ^c mouths of false and mercenary teachers, if to make judiciary ^d process against an Heretick by formal admonition, and by final ejection; if these be acts of jurisdiction, *Titus's* claim to it can no more be disputed now by schismatics, than contested then by Hereticks. Yea they themselves are compell'd to allow the eminence of the stations of those primary Bishops, but deny the perpetuity. They implead their government not to have been fix'd and durable, but local and temporary; their superiority in the Church to have been of the same formal and arbitrary nature as of a presidency in assemblies; and their transcendent powers to have been of no farther extent or continuance than of a Consul in a State, or Prolocutor in a Synod; elected

to moderate for a time the publick affairs of the Church; but his commission expiring, descending again into the coequal rank of Presbyters without any personal discrimination.

But in answer to this visionary plan of discipline may we not resume the challenge of that Father, *Edant Origines*, let them produce their authentick records of such a shifting presidency, the least mention in all antiquity of any such plebeian and ambulatory government? Where are their registers of these spiritual officers? Where the lists, and æras of their succession? by the providential superintendence of the Holy Spirit of God there remain to this day registers preserv'd in the Church, like the roll in the ark, not maim'd by length or vicissitudes of time, which contain a punctual enumeration of Bishops, who from the Apostles down to the Nicæan Council presided in the Churches of *Antioch*, of *Jerusalem*, of *Alexandria*, of *Rome*, living and dying upon their charges, no momentary guides of the Church, nor subject to removal like officers in state or commanders in armies.

^a Bilsen
cap. 17. de
perpetua
gubernatione Ec-
clesiæ.

And as this argument has no foundation in history, so neither has that other in reason, whence they would infer the equality of offices from the scriptural community of names. For a Bishop comprehending in his office the whole Hierarchy,

rarchy, may by the same condescension and propriety be styl'd a *Presbyter* or *Deacon*, as the Apostle himself was an *Evangelist* and *Minister*. Granting then the promiscuous use of the words *Bishop* and *Presbyter* in holy writ, which yet is the late interpretation of the fourth Century, if hence the primitive governours of the Church sometimes assum'd the names of *Presbyters* to express their humility; yet they were oftentimes graced with the title of *Apo-*
stles, to declare their superiority.

Phil. 2.
 25. Theodoret, in 1.
 Tim. cap.
 3.

Thus Scripture brings in her infallible Witness, that St. *Paul* by his own hands did in-
 feoffe these two Bishops *Timothy* and *Titus* in their respective dioceses, and did seat them in their Episcopal thrones: and should we run up thro' Ecclesiastical history to the originals of the first renown'd Churches, they all bring in their faithful accounts, glorying in their Apostolical Founders. *Mark* the inspired Evangelist was made Bishop of *Alexandria* by the Apostles, *Linus* of *Rome* by St. *Peter*; *Polycarp* of *Smyrna* by St. *John*. This last mention'd Prelate whose fame stands first in Ecclesiastick Record, and *Onesimus* whose praise is in the Gospel, are acknowledg'd to be two of those seven Bishops of the seven Churches, mention'd in the Revelations of St. *John*. These the Holy Ghost vouchsafes

vouchsafes to grace with the high compellation of *Angels, Angels*, not on account of their divine ministry, but fix'd superiority: whom he commends for their personal graces; whom he menaces and censures, not for the usurpation of their power, but remissness in its administration.

Many of this first class of Bishops planted in several regions by the Apostles, by course of nature or an early martyrdom, resign'd their vacant thrones again into the same hands and disposition. But St. *John* a Patriarch in longævity as well as authority, who govern'd the Church sixty years after Christ's Crucifixion, probably surviv'd an entire succession.

If then not only the first filling of the new created Sees of the Hierarchy, but several supplies of their vacancies pass'd under the hands, under the direction of the Apostles themselves, with what pervicacious ignorance do some affirm it to have been an innovation of their immediate Successors? Had those persons by a concerted Tyranny made this bold and hasty step, had they upon the demise of the Apostles (like the wanton Israelites upon the departure of *Moses*) worshipp'd an idol of their own invention; if the Lord himself had not in those days of miracles visited with a curse and with a plague;

yet that zealous Apostle St. *John*, incens'd with the indignation of *Moses*, would doubtless have caused it to be broken down, and have ground it to powder. He who censured *Diotrephes* (that great Ecclesiastick) for contesting his transcendent Patriarchal power, he who menaced the *Asian* Churches for the least deviation from the Truth, would he have suffer'd a total defection? would he have permitted the Tabernacle of the Christian Church to be dissolv'd? No: *nor a stake thereof to be loos'd, nor a cord thereof to be broken.*

Let then our adversaries say of all the Churches, as St. *Jerom* said of the *Corinthian*, that this sacred institution in general sprung from disorder, that a contentious emulation arising from a parity obliged the Apostles to found a subordination of Governours; yet whilst they debase the dignity, they grant the Apostolical date of it's original. Not but 'tis doubtless of a more noble, a more antient extraction. Before the foundations of the Church in *Corinth*, or of *Corinth* it self that antient city, before the foundations of the earth were laid, was this ordinance also establish'd by the predestinated will of the Spirit of God; whose eternal purposes in his Church, tho' commencing in time, are not derived from the disorders nor determin'd by the occurrences of it;

it; neither is the unchangeable Spirit of Wisdom taught new counsels by the sinful passions of men.

If upon the wide extent of the Church spreading like the camp of Israel, the Holy Ghost gave direction to the Apostles more sure and necessary than that of *Jethro* to *Moses*, to chuse Bishops out of every nation, *like heads out of every tribe*, which in their residentiary governments should divide the burthen of the people; tho' either the Absence of the Apostles, or distance of territory, either the overflowing numbers or unruliness of mix'd Profelytes, tho' these might be the adventitious and collateral occasions of constituting particular Bishopricks, yet they were not the primary and predetermin'd grounds of the original order. These promiscuous irregularities might hasten their erection, or when erected, might produce regulations in them; but he alone, who is a God of order, founded this uniform and harmonious frame of government.

For in nations as distant in customs as situation, yea in the nearest distances of time as well as widest intervals of place, we find it rear'd up in a similar and compleat establishment, an establishment so widely so speedily so regularly accomplish'd doubtless by the Eternal Spirit, working mightily in the Apostles his sacred instruments;

ments; forasmuch as only his unresisted power could give it such dispatch, and his unerring wisdom such uniformity.

The founding of any Civil Government is the work of ages: the wisdom of its laws is perfected by experience of their defects, and the stability of them by manifold changes: and when 'tis thus gradually wrought into an approved and consummate model, it's introduction into a nation is arrested by the opposition of War, and an inbred contention of the people for their antient municipal ways. But the diffusion of this one Government in all nations was not subject to the lingring determination of battles or of treaties, partaking of the blessing given to the first Propagators; *"whose line on a suddain went out into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world."*

• Psa]. 19.
22.

And it's Divinity which is thus evidenced by it's miraculous promulgation, is no less confirm'd by it's wondrous duration. As God's settled ordinances in nature, so his positive decrees in Religion are strengthen'd by length of days, which decays the artificial works of men and blots out their celebrated opinions. *If this thing be of Men it will come to nought,* said that great master of Israel, of Christianity it self. Since then this leading ordinance has been try'd by multitude

tude of years, and by successive assaults of persecutions, as it's exemption from natural decay declares it not to be of Men, so it's surmounting their sinful oppositions manifests it's protection as well as original to be of God.

If then ye believe not the record which Scripture gives to the Divinity of this Order, we ought *to believe it for the very work's sake*; for that testifies of it, by it's supernatural promulgation in all nations, and continuation in all succeeding ages.

Thus Holy Writ by the apparent precedents of Episcopacy in the persons of *Timothy* and *Titus* and of the seven Angels of the *Asian* Churches, confirm'd by it's establishment and perpetuity, are those Divine Testimonies, whereby God bears witness to his holy ordinance.

Let us from this strong foundation of our Faith the witness of God, descend to the testimony of men abounding in the writings of the Primitive Fathers, in the antient canons and synodical constitutions, and universal practice of the Church of Christ, which all come in with unanimous and coherent evidence ratifying the testimony of Scripture, as the voice of the spouse seconding the voice of her glorious husband.

But if our adversaries perpetually cast in all appeals to the antients, still retreat to that sceptical

a The Lord's
day. Di-
funt-Bap-
tism. &c.

ptical exhortation, is it written? requiring hereof a more particular and express comprehension in holy writ; we shall only premise, that this demand declares their partial and inconsistent prejudice against this ordinance, since they submit to 'others as of necessary obligation upon inferiour, at least but equal, evidences of Scripture.

And as this demand is inconsistent with their practice, so is it irrational in its nature.

The Apostolical doctrines, which are the objects of the Christian faith, are set down in Scripture, being unalterable in all times and universal in all nations. But matters of fact are transmitted down in a genuine and authentick method no less in vulgar history than in sacred record; since even in this, their truth is ascertain'd, not by the evidence of faith, but apprehensions of sense. And as we believe the narration of Christ's miraculous acts not so much from the inspiration of the Evangelists, as in that they were contemporaries and present eye-witnesses of the facts; so we may say of the succeeding historians of the Church, as the Apostles themselves said of the first, *these are they which knew these things, and wrote these things*, and upon account of these advantages of evidence, *we know that their testimony is true.*

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Let us then, as the Lord himself advises his distracted people, let us *stand in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way*, let us ask of those antient Fathers who cast it up with their own hands, and traced it out with their own footsteps for the direction of future generations.

Out of this ample list give me leave to make a brief citation only of two holy martyrs, the one for the peculiar and level direction, the other for the plenitude of his Testimony.

The first in order is *Clemens* the beloved co-partner of the two great Apostles *St. Paul* and *St. Peter*; one mentioned in the epistles of the former with great esteem, one who laid the other in his grave, and who succeeded him in his See and in his Martyrdom. This holy Martyr and Bishop of *Rome* writes an admonitory Epistle to the *Corinthians* miserably involved in an outrageous Schism among and against their Bishops and Presbyters, even to the expulsion of the persons, and confounding the orders; he to pacify these distractions, traces to them the divine original of their distinction in offices and in names.

"Our Apostles knowing by our Lord Jesus Christ the Contention that would arise (*ἡ ἐρις ὀνόματος*) about the name of Episcopacy; and (*ἡ ἀνωμαλία*) they for this very cause having receiv'd perfect knowledge,

“knowledge, appointed the foresaid degrees, and
“gave thereupon a design’d order or list of offi-
“ces. As the Apostles receiv’d this command
of ordaining these different orders from the Lord
by inspiration, so this their companion receiv’d it
from them by immediate tradition. As the evi-
dence of these passages confirm’d by many
others, is strangely apposite, so the authority of
the epistle is most authentick; not of a suspected
and spurious fame like his forg’d recognitions
or Apostolical constitutions; but of old read
publickly in Churches as well as celebrated by
the Antients.

The other witness is the renown’d *Ignatius*,
equal to the former in station and martyrdom,
but superiour to him in his testimony; one who
saw the Apostle St. *John*, if not Christ himself
in the flesh, and who in imitation of his Reve-
lations wrote epistles to seven Churches: in these
he has so distinguished these three orders in of-
fice and in titles, so determin’d their subordinate
powers, so exalted their ministerial dignity; that
this evidence overbears all reply, debarrs all
evasion.

Whether, this controversy not arising, these
decisive epistles lay many ages in silence, or whe-
ther, after it’s rise, they were providentially con-
ceal’d for the tryal of his Church; their miracu-
lous

lous publication in the late age out of the destruction of Barbarism, was like the appearance of the roll found by *Baruch* among the ruins of the Temple: and the efforts of the adversary to suppress the authority of them, which so witnessed their condemnation, succeeded no better than the irrational transports of *Jehoiakim*, who burnt the roll that threatned his destruction: since it has produced a defence of their genuine authority by a Learned ^a Prelate fraught with such riches of supernumerary learning, as this unparallel'd piece stands now the glory of this National Church, the just envy of Foreign, and the eternal vindication of the Catholick, the Mother of them all.

^a Pearson's
vind. Ig-
nat.

The Testimony of this single Father and glorious martyr is so compleat, so redoubled in every Epistle, that a citation of some particulars would be a separation of their strength: it is so compleat, that if the time would allow us to summon in *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, *Ambrose*, or even *St. Jerome* with all the Ecclesiastick writers in a long chain of succession; we might appeal to the satiated adversary; what need have we of any further witness?

Those therefore who are not abandon'd to the penal infatuation of an affected schism, or a fashionable infidelity, I shall refer to the Epistles
D themselves

themselves with that exhortation of St. *John*: *He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear, what this Holy Martyr saith unto the Churches.*

Now if the single writings of those blessed Saints carry an uncontested authority, the constitutions of them when conven'd in general councils demand an universal submission.

It has been an antient test in the Catholick Church, that any ordinance or usage, whose institution could not be traced in a general council, must be deriv'd from Apostolical appointment; because no decree or authentick act less than of a general council, could extend to all Christian Churches, but the Acts of the Apostles those universal Patriarchs, to whom the whole earth was but a diocese, and whose words went with authority *unto the ends of the world*. Now in no council either general or of an inferiour denomination, can we find the first establishment of Episcopacy recorded, but the defence and confirmation of it can we find in all.

^a Beveridge
Cod. Can.
vindic.

The antient Canons, which wear the stamp if not of Apostolical authority yet of great ^a Antiquity, have cast a strong enclosure about the Episcopal powers, without the least mention of their institution. In these venerable constitutions are seen the *landmarks*, which however disturb'd and trodden down by after-ages, the primitive *Fathers have set.*

But

But in the constitutions of succeeding councils the power of ordination is so guarded from the invasion of Presbyters, that the administration of it was not indulg'd to *Rural* Bishops. When *Colluthus* a Presbyter of *Alexandria* presum'd to ordain, how was this usurpation censured in a general council, the act of ordination rescinded, and those titular Presbyters, disrobed of their pretended orders, turn'd down with derision into the Laick form!

But the jurisdiction of Bishops has in all councils been so universally maintain'd, that in some the denial of their power has been condemn'd as heresy, and the dethroning their persons has been declared Sacrilege. Their authority in the Church has been confirm'd by the decrees of the greatest Emperours, recommended by their submissive language, demonstrated by their actual subjection. Neither can it be contested without sacrilege by the greatest of Nobles, when they behold the greatest of Emperours de-
Theodos.
 barr'd by a penance more severe than the Leprosy inflicted on King *Ussiah*, when like him he attempted by violence to approach the Altar.

And those who disguise the novelty of their Schism under an antient Heresy, who take *Aerius* that branded heretick for their founder and patriarch;

triarch; whilst they magnify his publick opposition to his Bishop, do but remind us of his publick condemnation: whose ambitious and sacrilegious contests against his Diocesan, and whose opinions and punishment, are reserv'd in Ecclesiastical records, like the censers of *Corah* and his company, *those sinners against their own souls, to be a memorial to the children of Israel; that none that is not legally of the seed of Aaron come near to offer incense before the Lord.*

By this recollection of testimonies (too prolix for this place, but too narrow for this subject) it appears; that every Christian Bishop from the beginning of Christianity to this day, hath been call'd of God as was *Aaron*: it appears, that the ordinance of the sacred Hierarchy was founded by our Saviour, planted in all regions by his Apostles, confirm'd by holy Scripture, by Apostolical acts, by the immediate practice of the primitive Church, and by the universal practice of the succeeding Church, ratify'd by the judgement of all sacred Synods, all holy Fathers.

By these unshaken authorities is every Bishop exalted above his brethren: and when he is array'd in his holy ornaments, to all unprejudiced eyes his appearance among his inferiour clergy resembles the supereminence of *Simon* the High-Priest;

Priest; *who when he put on the robe of honour, and was cloathed with the perfection of glory, when he went up to the holy altar, made the garment of holiness honourable: who stood as a cedar in Libanus, compassed about by all the sons of Aaron in their glory, before all the congregation of Israel.* Ecclus 50. 11, 12.

Having thus establish'd the doctrine, we proceed to make our destin'd application by directing our exhortations

1st. To those that oppose and renounce Episcopacy.

2^{dly}. To those who maintain the Institution. And

First, as to those who Oppose it.

Now as we upbraid the unequal choice of Atheists, that if there be no life to come, our error passes away with the dissolution of our being; but if there be a future state, their mistake ends in eternal condemnation: so with similitude of argument, tho' not extent of consequences, we may forewarn our adversaries, if Episcopacy be not essentially a different form from Presbytery, if the powers vested in Bishops may be equally diffused to Presbyters, yet we stand upon equal terms of security; inas-
much